

5. What Podolsky, Einstein and Others Have Taught Me about Greatness

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Abstract:

Continuing scientific progress often results in a focus on technological advancements while ignoring those scientists who have brought them to fruition. By ignoring the life stories and struggles of these scientists, generations of students are being deprived of insight that may serve to encourage them to enter the scientific fields. Furthermore, they may develop a perspective that suggests that these advancements occur with little personal or professional struggle. It is becoming increasingly common to compare scientists based upon their achievements. These comparisons could discourage students from entering the scientific disciplines by suggesting that contributions not equal to or surpassing those of the most celebrated scientists are essentially worthless. This results in a winner-take all attitude. This article details the experiences of one social scientist in his quest to develop a greater understanding of science, scientists and those characteristics that ultimately determine greatness.

Keywords:

Podolsky, Einstein, Princeton University, Institute for Advanced Study, Los Alamos, Niels Bohr Library and Archive, Xavier University